

Man arrested in new disturbance on Detroit flight



Aircrafts from Delta-Northwest are being supplied and loaded before departure at Schiphol Airport, near Amsterdam on December 26. The White House warned political foes Sunday not to provoke a partisan tug of war over terrorism, with President Barack Obama yet to publicly address the thwarted attack on a US airliner.

(AFP/ANP/File/Marcel Antonisse)

By PAMELA HESS and CALVIN WOODWARD, Associated Press Writers
WASHINGTON – A Nigerian passenger onboard the same Northwest Airlines route that was attacked on Christmas Day was taken into custody in

Detroit on Sunday after locking himself in the bathroom for an hour and becoming verbally disruptive upon landing, officials said. The latest disturbance aboard Northwest Airlines Flight 253 came as the U.S. system for checking suspicious travelers and airport security came under new scrutiny, prompted by an alleged terrorist bent on destroying a jetliner

who was thwarted only by a malfunctioning detonator and some quick-thinking passengers. Delta Air Lines spokeswoman Susan Elliott said crew members on Sunday requested that security remove the man from Flight 253 after he became disruptive. The remaining 255 passengers got off safely, she said.

Continued on Next Page



In this image made available in London Wednesday Dec. 23, 2009, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II poses prior to the recording of her annual Christmas Day broadcast to the Commonwealth, in the White Drawing Room at Buckingham Palace in London, Thursday Dec. 20, 2009.

(AP Photo/John Stillwell, pool)

Queen Elizabeth praises forces in Afghanistan

By SYLVIA HUI, Associated Press Writer

LONDON – Britain's Queen Elizabeth II paid tribute to the country's troops fighting in Afghanistan in her annual Christmas speech broadcast Friday, praising their work while expressing her sadness at the casualties.

The queen's message came at the end of a year in which 106 British soldiers were killed in the troubled Central Asian country. 2009 has been the bloodiest year for the British military since the war started nine years ago, and public support for the U.S.-led campaign has waned as the death toll mounts in the fight against Taliban militants.

"I am sure that we have all been affected by events in Afghanistan and saddened by the casualties suffered by our forces serving there," the queen said in an address prerecorded in Buckingham Palace's White Drawing Room.

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DETROIT FLIGHT

Continued from Front Page

A law enforcement official said the man was Nigerian and had locked himself in the airliner's bathroom. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation was ongoing.

An apparent malfunction in a device designed to detonate the high explosive PETN may have been all that saved the 278 passengers and the crew aboard Northwest Flight 253 on Christmas Day. No undercover air marshal was on board and passengers

subdued the suspect, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, 23, of Nigeria.

Abdulmutallab was hospitalized with burns from the attack and was read an indictment filed Saturday in federal court in Detroit charging him with attempting to destroy or wreck an aircraft and placing a destructive device in a plane. He was released from the hospital Sunday to the custody of federal marshals, who would not reveal where he was being held.

Abdulmutallab was on a



Scott Studer takes his daughter Ella from his wife Jen as they prepare to return home to Boston at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport after visiting family in Detroit Sunday, Dec. 27, 2009 in Romulas, Mich. The U.S. government tightened airline security as it searches for answers to how a 23-year-old Nigerian man eluded extensive systems intended to prevent attacks like his botched Christmas Day effort to blow up a Northwest flight from overseas.

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watch list, but not one that denied him passage by air into the U.S. His own father had discussed concerns about his radical religious views before the attack.

Still, in appearances on Sunday talk shows, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said the traveling public "is very, very safe."

"This was one individual literally of thousands that fly and thousands of flights every year," Napolitano said. "And he was stopped before any damage could be done. I think the important thing to recognize here is that once this incident occurred, everything happened that should have."

Even so, airport security and intelligence played no role in thwarting the plot. Abdulmutallab was carrying PETN, also known as pentaerythritol, the same material convicted shoe bomber Richard Reid used when he tried to destroy a trans-Atlantic flight in 2001 with explosives hidden in his shoes. Abdulmutallab is alleged to have carried the explosive in condom-like pouches attached to his body. Abdulmutallab was on a "generic" terrorist watch list, which includes more than half a million names, but was not elevated to a no-fly list or

even designated for additional security searches, Napolitano said. That would have required "specific, credible, derogatory information," she said.

"We did not have the kind of information that under the current rules would elevate him," she said.

Napolitano said the Obama administration is considering changing those rules.

Despite being on the broad terrorist watch list, Abdulmutallab, who comes from a prominent and wealthy Nigerian family, had a multiple-entry U.S. visa. It was issued last year. U.S. officials say he came to the attention of America intelligence in November, when his father expressed concerns to the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria about his son's extremist views.

NapolitanosaidAbdulmutallab was properly screened before getting on the flight to Detroit from Amsterdam.

The administration is also investigating aviation detection systems to see how the alleged attacker managed to get on board the Northwest flight in Amsterdam with explosive materials, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said.

No other flights were known to have been targeted. However, Gibbs says federal

(AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast)

authorities took precautionary steps "to assume and plan for the very worst." Napolitano said there is no indication yet Abdulmutallab is part of a larger terrorist plot, although his possible ties to al-Qaida are still under investigation.

The United States is reviewing what security measures were used in Amsterdam where he boarded the flight.

"Now the forensics are being analyzed with what could have been done," Napolitano said.

Additional security measures are in place at airports around the world that are likely to slow travelers. Napolitano advised getting to airports earlier.

Congress is preparing to hold hearings on what happened and whether rules need to be changed.

"It's amazing to me that an individual like this who was sending out so many signals could end up getting on a plane going to the U.S.," said Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., the Republican leader in the Senate.

Gibbs appeared on ABC's "This Week," NBC's "Meet the Press" and CBS' "Face the Nation." Napolitano spoke on CNN's "State of the Union" as well as on NBC and ABC. McConnell appeared on ABC

After United 93, air travelers react to threats

By ED WHITE,
Associated Press Writer

DETROIT — They heard a pop that sounded like fireworks. They saw a glow of flame followed by a rush of smoke. And that was enough for passengers on Northwest Airlines Flight 253 to pounce.

From several seats away, Dutch tourist Jasper Schuringa says he jumped to extinguish a fire ignited by a quiet man who just moments before allegedly told passengers his stomach was upset and pulled a blanket over himself. Schuringa said his first thought wasn't to signal a flight attendant or wait for an air marshal to break cover, but rather, "He's trying to blow up the plane."

"I basically reacted directly," Schuringa said Saturday in an interview with CNN. "I didn't think. I just jumped. I just went over there and tried to save the plane."

Aviation safety experts once would have called Schuringa's actions a mistake and cautioned passengers against fighting back during hijackings and other crises in the air. That was before the Sept. 11 attacks and the actions of passengers on United Flight 93, who learned while aloft about the hijacked jets that slammed earlier that day into New York's World Trade Center.

They staged a cabin revolt against the al-Qaida terrorists who had taken control of their flight and died when their plane crashed into a field in Shanksville, Pa. But they succeeded in keeping the jet from destroying another building that day, and their story became legend.

"I don't think people are going to sit back and let somebody kill them in the process of fulfilling their extremist agenda or whatever it happens to be," said Dave Heffernan, who helps oversee self-defense training for commercial flight crews at Valenica Community College in Orlando, Fla. "People have talked about it. They've thought about it. They have a plan of action."

On Saturday, a day after the failed attack on Northwest 253, federal prosecutors charged Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, 23, a native of Nigeria, with trying to destroy the airliner with a device containing a high explosive attached to his body. They alleged that Abdulmutallab set off the device — sparking a fire instead of an explosion — as the flight from Amsterdam descended toward Detroit Metropolitan Airport.

Schuringa, of Amsterdam, told CNN that he didn't think about his own safety when he extinguished the fire with his hands. He and other passengers said that several people on board, including members of the flight crew, then joined him in taking Abdulmutallab to first class to strip off his clothes and search

for any more explosives.

Schuringa did not immediately reply to e-mail and phone messages from The Associated Press.

"In a matter of minutes everything was settled down. ... The passengers were proactive. We just did it. There was nothing to talk about," said Syed Jafry, 57.

Another passenger, Richelle Keepman, 24, of Oconomowoc, Wis., said passengers were later interviewed by authorities and released from the airport. When Schuringa came through the area, "We were all clapping," she said.

Schuringa joins the passengers on United 93 and others who have leapt into action to defend themselves aloft since 9/11. Just three months after the attacks, Briton Richard Reid was overpowered by passengers and crew members on a flight from Paris to Miami as he tried to ignite plastic explosives hidden in his shoes. A doctor onboard went so far as to inject the restrained Reid with a sedative.

Passengers aren't only responding to obvious acts of terror. In June, two off-duty officers handcuffed a traveler who took off his clothes and kicked and punched a flight attendant on a US Airways flight to Los Angeles from Charlotte, N.C. In April 2008, passengers duct-taped a drunken man to his seat after he attacked a United Airlines flight attendant on a trip to Los Angeles from Hong Kong.

"Aggressive intervention has become the new societal norm," said Bill Voss, an expert at the Flight Safety Foundation in Alexandria, Va. The day after the attack, authorities at airports worldwide tightened security, imposing extra searches on the ground and telling passengers flying to the U.S. from overseas they can't get out of their seat during the last hour of their flight. None seemed to mind, and many said they knew the story of United 93 and would respond aggressively if the new security measures failed.

"I know how to tackle," said Stephen Evans, 39, a former rugby player traveling from Chicago to Dulles International Airport near Washington. "Your odds are better to get the guy and risk an explosion on the plane rather than fly into Washington's Monument or what have you."

Jennifer Allen, 41, of Shelby Township, Mich., arrived in Detroit from Amsterdam on Saturday's Northwest 253.

"We're not so blase, not so willing to accept that we're safe and we can let someone do our security for us," she said. "We're not going to sit there and wait for somebody else to do it because if you wait, it might be too late." □



Passengers are seen outside Schiphol airport in Amsterdam, Netherlands on Saturday Dec. 26, 2009. A Northwest Airlines passenger from Nigeria who claimed to be acting on orders from al-Qaida set off an explosive device on a Christmas Day flight in a failed terrorist attack on the plane as it was landing in Detroit, US Federal officials said. The suspect boarded in Nigeria and went through Schiphol airport in Amsterdam en route to Detroit. Dutch anti-terrorism authorities said the U.S. has asked all airlines to take extra precautions on flights worldwide that are bound for the United States.

(AP Photo/Evert Elzinga)

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Obama orders review of US no-fly lists



President Barack Obama pauses as he and first lady Michelle Obama greet marines during Christmas dinner at Anderson Hall on Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kailua, Hawaii Friday, Dec. 25, 2009. The Obamas are in Hawaii for the holidays.

(AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

by Melissa Preddy ordered Sunday a review of
 DETROIT, Michigan (AFP) US no-fly watch-lists and
 – President Barack Obama demanded to know how a

Nigerian man managed to board a Detroit-bound airliner wearing an explosive device. The system used by US security agencies of lists that become shorter as the risk increases has come under fire since it emerged that the 23-year-old bomb suspect was on one of the terrorist data bases when he embarked on his deadly suicide mission. “There’s a series of data bases that list people of concern to several agencies across the government. We want to make sure information-sharing is going on,” White House spokesman Robert Gibbs told NBC news.

The suspect, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, was added to one of the larger watch-lists last month after his father is said to have told US embassy officials in Abuja that he was concerned by his son’s increasing radicalism. Related article: Bomber ‘trained’ by Al-Qaeda in Yemen

The suspect, whose father is a prominent Nigerian banker, remained off the no-fly list of just 18,000 names and was able to retain his US visa issued in 2008 and fly from Lagos to Amsterdam on Christmas Eve and on to Detroit the following day.

Obama had ordered a second review to examine how “an individual with the chemical explosive he had on him could get onto an airliner in Amsterdam and fly into this country,” Gibbs said.

The attack led to tighter security and traveler jitters around the world, which were heightened dramatically on Sunday when another man on Northwest Airlines Flight 253 from Amsterdam to Detroit -- the same route and flight number as Friday’s attack -- was detained on landing after causing a disturbance

by barricading himself in the bathroom for more than an hour.

With worldwide media attention riveted on Detroit, the Federal Bureau of Investigation later issued a statement saying Sunday’s was a “non-serious incident.” US investigators are trying to piece together any terrorism connections of Abdulmutallab, who was charged Saturday with attempting to blow up the jetliner after reportedly confessing that he had been trained by Al-Qaeda in Yemen.

But Obama’s top security official said Sunday there was “no indication” that Abdulmutallab was acting as part of a larger plot and warned against speculating that he had been trained by Al-Qaeda.

“This was one individual literally of thousands that fly and thousands of flights every year. And he was stopped before any damage could be done,” US Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano told CNN.

Airport security was stepped up worldwide after the botched terror attack as British police combed premises where the suspect lived while studying mechanical engineering at the University of London between 2005 and 2008. Related article: The London link

Abdulmutallab was arraigned Saturday at the University of Michigan medical center where he was being treated for burns sustained while trying to bring down the flight.

Judge Paul Borman read the charges against him during a 20-minute hearing. Reporters allowed to witness the event said Abdulmutallab was handcuffed to a wheelchair and wore bandages on both wrists and parts of his hands. Preliminary FBI analysis found

that the device the suspect used “contained PETN, also known as pentaerythritol, a high explosive,” the charge sheet said.

The explosive material was allegedly sewn into Abdulmutallab’s underwear and officials believe tragedy was averted only because the makeshift detonator failed to work properly, ABC News reported.

Abdulmutallab confessed that he had mixed a syringe full of chemicals with powder taped to his leg to try to blow up the flight, according to senior officials quoted by US media. Related article: Story of a Dutch hero

Other law enforcement officials quoted by ABC News and NBC said the suspect also admitted he had been trained by Al-Qaeda operatives in Yemen and instructed specifically on how to carry out the attack.

According to The New York Times, Abdulmutallab told FBI agents he was connected to an Al-Qaeda affiliate, which operates largely in Yemen and Saudi Arabia, by a radical Yemeni cleric whom he contacted online. Related article: Nigerians pulled to radicalism by education, poverty

But the newspaper said the cleric is not believed to be Anwar al-Awlaki, a US-born imam who has spoken in favor of anti-American violence and who corresponded with Major Nidal Hasan, the US Army psychiatrist accused of shooting 13 people dead last month at Fort Hood, Texas.

The plane attack, which sparked alarm and fear among the 279 passengers and 11 crew aboard the Airbus A330, had echoes of British-born Richard Reid’s botched “shoe-bomb” attempt eight years ago almost to the day. □

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22 and counting:

Mystery fires rattle Houston

By JUAN A. LOZANO,
Associated Press Writer

HOUSTON — A four-foot pile of ash and charred debris is all that remains of the Rodriguez family's two-story garage, which had been stuffed with tools, machinery, couches and appliances when a mysterious fire ripped through it earlier this month.

It was the 22nd arson that has taken place since August in a historic Houston neighborhood called the Heights, known more for its comforting small-town feel in the midst of big city sprawl than for being the center of criminal activity.

Most of the fires have taken place in the middle of the night and nearly always in abandoned structures, though flames have leapt to some adjacent occupied homes, frightening residents like the Rodriguez family.

"I just don't know when they are going to catch this guy," a dejected Jesus Rodriguez said as he stood over his truck's pickup bed, dirtied by ash and scorched pieces of wood after it had been used to haul away the debris.

Authorities charged a suspect last month for starting one of the blazes. But he has not been charged with any of the other arsons and the fires continued even after his arrest. Residents of the Heights, which sits on one of Houston's rare hills overlooking nearby downtown, have taken some comfort no one has been hurt. But they worry their property could be next.

"I don't feel like they have the

person that did it," said Diane Kight, who lives across the street from a home set ablaze on Nov. 11. She was recently driving home after taking her husband to work and saw a fire truck, and immediately worried it could be speeding to her house. "It's scary."

The damage to the Rodriguez garage came when an empty house next door was set ablaze in the early morning hours of Dec. 4, and the flames quickly spread to the Rodriguez's garage in the back of their one-story brown Craftsman style bungalow, where they have lived for 25 years. The fire also damaged a portion of the back roof, now covered by a blue tarp. Two bedrooms won't be used until the roof can be fixed but it could be awhile.

"We don't have insurance. There is no money to fix it," said Jesus Rodriguez.

His son, Randall Rodriguez, 23, said the tools and machinery were part of a repair business run by his mother and were being temporarily stored in the garage until his parents could open up a new shop. The furniture and appliances belonged to Randall Rodriguez and his wife, who had temporarily moved back in with his parents. The total loss is estimated at \$70,000.

The fires have kept to the Heights, a neighborhood of more than 40,000 residents first developed in 1892. Its streets are lined by majestic trees and stately Victorian-styled homes. The locally owned antiques and coffee

In this Dec. 3, 2009 file photo, a home destroyed by fire in the Heights neighborhood of Houston is shown. Since August, the calm of the neighborhood in north central Houston has been overrun by fear and tension as a string of 22 arson fires, most in the middle of the night, have damaged homes and other structures.

(AP Photo/David J. Phillip, File)

shops and art galleries give it a laid-back atmosphere.

But the landscape has changed on some streets. Some of the torched structures still stand, littered with burned mattresses, blackened photographs. Others have been torn down, only a concrete foundation or dirt lot remaining.

The fires have shared a similar pattern: The arsonist targets mostly older, unoccupied homes, garages, storage sheds and other structures, setting them ablaze either late in the evening or in the early morning hours.

A few of the fires happened at occupied homes but no one was hurt. Some structures have been set ablaze more than once. One location was hit four times.

"We're very lucky that no one has been hurt," said Alison Stein, assistant chief investigator for the Houston Fire Department.

Arson investigators have concluded all the fires were intentionally set, Stein said. But authorities won't say how the fires have been started, if they believe one person or several are responsible or what their motive is. □



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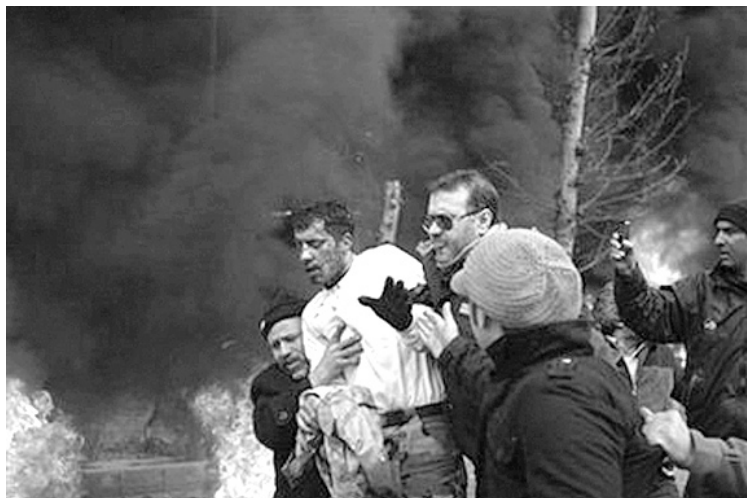
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This photo, taken by an individual not employed by the Associated Press and obtained by the AP outside Iran shows an Iranian police officer, center with white shirt, is protected and is taken away by people after being beaten by protestors during anti-government protest at the Enghelab (Revolution) St. in Tehran, Iran, Sunday, Dec. 27, 2009.

(AP Photo)

By **ALI AKBAR DAREINI**,
Associated Press Writer
TEHRAN, Iran — Iranian security forces fired on stone-throwing protesters in the center of the capital Sunday in one of the bloodiest confrontations in months, opposition Web sites and witnesses said. At least five people were killed. Some accounts of the violence in Tehran were vivid and detailed, but they could not be independently confirmed because of government restrictions on media coverage. Police, who denied using firearms, said dozens of officers were injured and more than 300 protesters were arrested.

The dead included a nephew of opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi, according to Mousavi's Web site, Kaleme.ir. The clashes were sure to deepen antagonism between the government and a reform movement that has shown resilience in the face of repeated crackdowns. The street chaos coincided with commemorations of Shiite Islam's most important observance, Ashoura, fueling protesters' defiance with its message of sacrifice and dignity in the face of coercion. Still, many demonstrators had not anticipated such harsh tactics by the authorities, despite police warnings of

At least 5 killed in Iran protests

tougher action against any protests on the sacred day.

Amateur video footage purportedly from the center of Tehran showed an enraged crowd carrying away one casualty, chanting, "I'll kill, I'll kill the one who killed my brother." In several locations, demonstrators confronted security forces, hurling stones and setting their motorcycles, cars and vans ablaze, according to video footage and pro-reform Web sites.

Protesters tried to cut off roads with burning barricades. One police officer was photographed with blood streaming down his face after he was set upon by the crowd. There were unconfirmed reports that four people died in protests in Tabriz in northwest Iran, the pro-reform Rah-e-Sabz Web site said. Fierce clashes also broke out in Isfahan and Najafabad in central Iran and Shiraz in the south, it said.

Mousavi's Web site said the nephew, Ali Mousavi, was shot in the back on Azadi Street, or Freedom Street, during clashes in which security forces reportedly fired on demonstrators, and was taken to Ibn Sina Hospital. It said Mousavi and other family members rushed to the

hospital.

A close aide to Mousavi, a presidential contender in a disputed June election, said Ali Mousavi died of injuries in the hospital. The aide spoke on condition of anonymity because of fears of reprisals from the government.

The protests began with thousands of opposition supporters chanting "Death to the dictator," a reference to hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, as they marched in defiance of official warnings of a harsh crackdown on any demonstrations coinciding with Ashoura. The observance commemorates the seventh-century death in battle of one of Shiite Islam's most beloved saints.

Security forces tried but failed to disperse protesters on a central Tehran street with tear gas, baton charges and warning shots. They then opened fire on protesters, said witnesses and the Rah-e-Sabz Web site.

The site said that in addition to Mousavi's nephew, four protesters were fatally shot — Mahdi Farhadinia, Mohammad Ali Rasekhinia, Amir Arshadi and Shahram Saraji.

Witnesses said one victim was an elderly man who had a gunshot wound to the forehead.

He was seen being carried away by opposition supporters with blood covering his face. More than two dozen opposition supporters were injured, some of them seriously, with limbs broken from beatings, according to witnesses.

An Iranian police statement said five people were killed in the unrest. "Experts are seeking to identify the suspicious elements," the statement said.

Iran's deputy police chief, Ahmad Reza Radan, said one person died after falling from a bridge, two were killed in a car accident, and a fourth was fatally shot.

"Given the fact that police did not use firearms, this incident looks completely suspicious and the case is under investigation," Radan said.

He said dozens of injured police were treated in hospitals, and more than 300 "seditionists" were arrested.

The clashes marked the bloodiest confrontation since the height of unrest in the weeks after June's election. The opposition says Ahmadinejad won the election through massive vote fraud and that Mousavi was the true winner.

Reporters from foreign media organizations were barred from covering the demonstrations on Tehran's central Enghelab Street, or Revolution Street. Video footage circulating on the Web could also not be authenticated.

Ambulance sirens wailed near the site of the protests. Police helicopters circled as smoke billowed over the capital. □

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Priest: 7 migrants killed in Suriname violence

By CLIFFTON SARIDJAN, Associated Press Writer
PARAMARIBO, Suriname — At least seven foreign migrants are dead and hundreds more homeless after rioting and attacks against migrant workers in Suriname left a border town in ashes, a Brazilian priest aiding victims said Sunday.

The Rev. Jose Vergilio said the riots in the town of Albina, which began late Thursday after a Brazilian allegedly stabbed a local man to death, have made the area uninhabitable for an estimated 300 people who fled.

Police have only confirmed one death without providing details. Vergilio's account suggested a higher toll, although the nationality of the dead migrants was unclear.

Authorities say at least 20 Brazilian women were raped in the tumult, and all Brazilians and many Chinese living in the area were evacuated.

Vergilio said more than 90 refugees, including several children, are currently living in a hotel in the capital, Paramaribo. At least 120 people took refuge at a military compound on Saturday before being transferred to the capital.

"They cannot go back to that place, there is so much confusion. They have nowhere to work or to live," Vergilio told The Associated Press by phone.

Police say 20 people including a local government official are in custody on charges including rape, theft and arson.

Brazil's foreign ministry announced Sunday it is sending two government representatives to Suriname to evaluate the situation. Suriname officials said military and police will step up patrols in Albina.

Vergilio, a Roman Catholic priest who has lived in the tiny South American nation for eight years, said the unrest is only the latest violence between people in Suriname and a growing community of Brazilian workers who cross the country's southern

border to work for companies prospecting for gold.

"This has roots in older problems — economic conflicts and conflicts over nationality," he said.

The rioting began Thursday, reportedly sparked by an argument at a Christmas Eve party that ended with a Brazilian man stabbing a man identified as a Maroon, a descendant of runaway African slaves.

Townpeople in Albina, which lies on the former Dutch colony's western border with French Guiana, reportedly began attacking Brazilians about an hour after the killing, and the violence spread to Chinese-owned businesses.

Photos taken by Vergilio and posted on Suriname's Radio Katolika FM show large areas of the town burnt to the ground.

The torched husks of cars, vans and trucks lined a parking lot; buildings displayed charred and blasted-out walls; and heaps of concrete blocks, garbage and roofing materials were piled on the ground. □

Avalanches kill seven in Italian Alps: emergency services

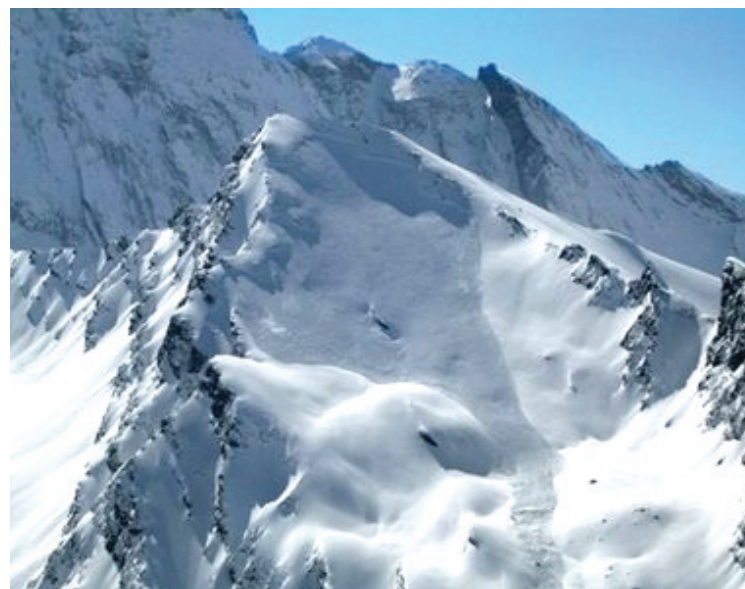
ROME (AFP) — A series of avalanches in the Italian Alps killed seven people, including a 12-year-old German boy and four rescue workers sent out to help two tourists, Italian emergency services said Sunday.

Two tourists were trapped in a first avalanche at Val Lasties, near Trentino, late Saturday, and a second avalanche killed four members of an seven-strong rescue team.

A separate avalanche meanwhile killed the 12-year-old German boy in nearby Alto Adige as he was skiing off-piste with his brother and a friend.

The two tourists, aged 30 and 31, from Udine, northern Italy, were both experienced and careful skiers, their family said.

Italian President Giorgio Napolitano sent his condolences and a message of support to the bereaved families.



View of a snowy peak in the Alps. A series of avalanches in the Italian Alps killed seven people, including a 12-year-old German boy and four rescue workers sent out to help two tourists, Italian emergency services said Sunday.

(AF/File)

But Guido Bertolaso, head of Italy's civil protection service, denounced the latest loss of rescuers.

"I've had enough of our rescue workers losing their lives because people go out on excursions without paying heed to the alerts," he said.

Two other rescue workers

caught up in the avalanche that killed their colleagues have left hospital after being treated for minor injuries.

Heavy snowfall and a rise in temperatures in the Alto Adige region had prompted local officials to increase the avalanche alert warning to level four on a scale of five. □

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Bomb suspect came from elite family, best schools

By JON GAMBRELL,
Associated Press Writer

LAGOS, Nigeria — As a member of an uppercrust Nigerian family, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab received the best schooling, from the elite British International School in West Africa to the vaunted University College London. But the education he wanted was of a different sort: Nigerian officials say his interest in extremist Islam prompted his father to warn U.S. authorities. As Abdulmutallab was being escorted in handcuffs off the Detroit-bound airliner

he attempted to blow up on Christmas Day, he told U.S. officials that he had sought an extremist education at an Islamist hotbed in Yemen. A portrait emerged Sunday of a serious young man who led a privileged life as the son of a prominent banker, but became estranged from his family as an adult. Devoutly religious, he was nicknamed “The Pope” for his saintly aura and gave few clues in his youth that he would turn radical, friends and family said.

“In all the time I taught him we never had cross words,” said

Michael Rimmer, a Briton who taught history at the British International School in Lome, Togo. “Somewhere along the line he must have met some sort of fanatics, and they must have turned his mind.” Abdulmutallab has been charged with trying to destroy a Northwest flight on Christmas Day with 278 passengers and 11 crew members on board. The detonator on his explosive apparently malfunctioned and he was subdued by other passengers.

Through an official, Abdulmutallab’s father

“expressed deep shock and regret over his son’s actions.” His family home sits in the city of Funtua, in the heart of Nigeria’s Islamic culture. Religion figured into the family’s life: His father, Alhaji Umar Mutallab, who had a successful career in commercial banking, also joined the board of an Islamic bank — one that avoids the kind of interest payments banned by the Quran.

The large house, surrounded by a wall and a metal fence just off the main road running through the city, stood empty, a common occurrence for a jet-set family that sought an education abroad for Abdulmutallab. Family members told The Associated Press they could not comment but expected the family to issue a statement.

Mutallab was working with the FBI and not expected to grant media interviews, Information Minister Dora Akunyili said. The elder Mutallab was “a responsible and respected Nigerian, with a true Nigerian spirit,” she said. He had been estranged from his son for several months and alerted U.S. officials last month about the youth’s growing hard-line Islamic religious beliefs.

A close neighbor told the AP he believed Abdulmutallab



In this undated photo provided by the Web site saharareporters.com and verified by an Associated Press reporter present at the subject’s arraignment, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab is shown. Abdulmutallab, who claimed ties to al-Qaida, was charged Saturday, Dec. 26, 2009 with trying to destroy a Detroit-bound airliner, just a month after his father warned U.S. officials of concerns about his son’s religious beliefs.

(AP Photo/saharareporters.com)

did not get his extremist ideas from his family or from within Nigeria.

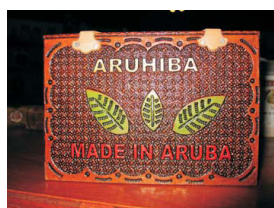
Basiru Sani Hamza, 35, said Abdulmutallab was a “very religious” and a “very obedient” to his parents as a boy in the well-to-do banking family. “I believe he must have been lured where he is schooling to carry out this attack,” Hamza said. □

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QUEEN ELIZABETH

Continued from Front Page

As she spoke, the television broadcast showed footage of a procession of hearses carrying the war dead moving slowly through streets lined with mourners in the small English town of Wootton Bassett. The scene has become a familiar one — it has been shown on national television every time a soldier's body was repatriated. The 83-year-old monarch offered her sympathy to bereaved families and praised the effort of Commonwealth soldiers fighting in Afghanistan. Aside from Britain, Commonwealth members Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore also have troops serving there.

"The debt of gratitude owed to these young men and women, and to their predecessors, is indeed profound," she said. "But, we can be proud of the positive contribution that our servicemen and women are making, in conjunction with our allies."

More than 240 British soldiers have been killed since operations began in Afghanistan in 2001. Prime Minister Gordon Brown has insisted that the war is crucial to Britain's national security, and he has pledged to boost troop numbers to about 10,000.

The annual broadcast is one of the only

times the queen — Britain's oldest reigning monarch — publicly voices her own opinion without government consultation. Her first televised broadcast was in 1957.

For this year's address, the queen wore a bright turquoise silk wool dress accessorized with a three-stringed pearl necklace, and a pearl and diamond brooch.

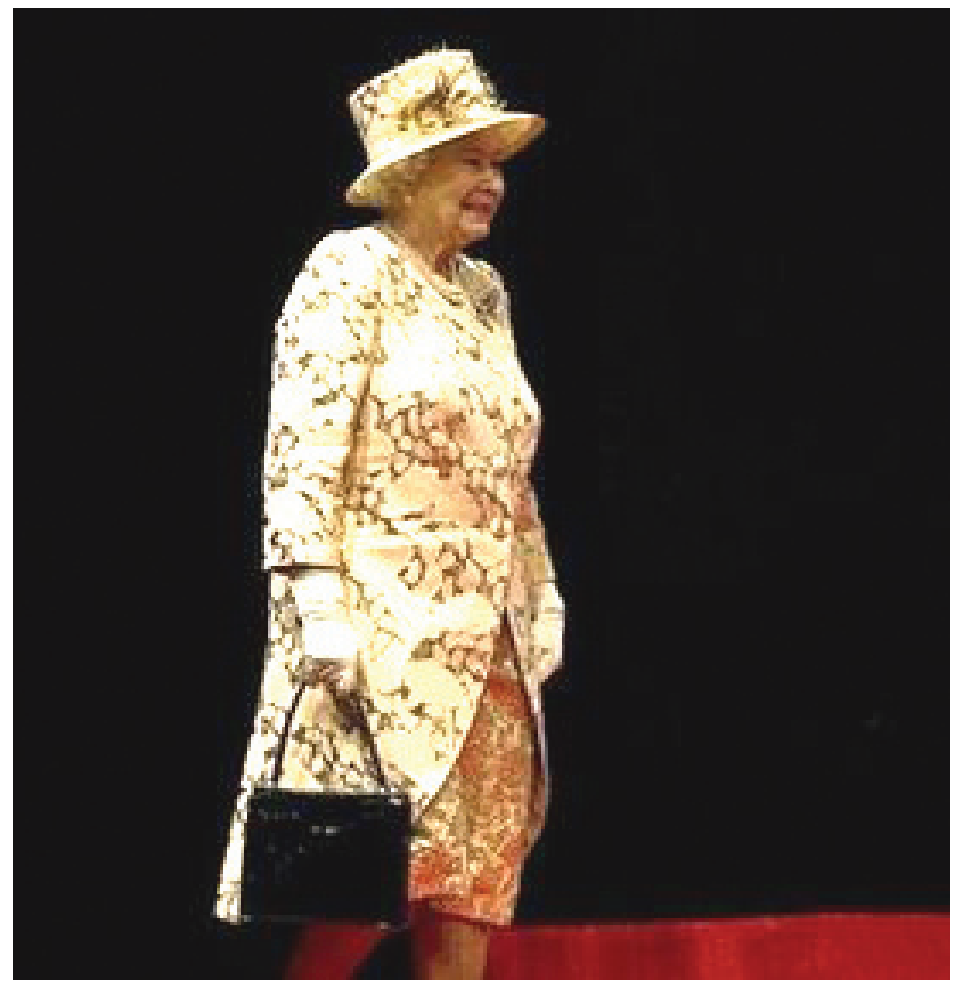
A large part of her message was dedicated to highlighting the importance of the Commonwealth — an institution that celebrates its 60th anniversary this year. The queen said the family of nations "remains a strong and practical force for good," and is a forum where its 54 member states cooperate to achieve practical solutions to problems.

The monarch also touched on the effects of the recession, echoing the somber focus on the economic crisis in her broadcast last year.

"2009 was a difficult year for many, in particular those facing the continuing effects of the economic downturn," she said.

On Friday, the queen and other members of the royal family attended their traditional Christmas Day church service on the queen's Sandringham House estate in Norfolk.

She was joined by the Duke of



Queen Elizabeth II, pictured in November 2009, will urge the Commonwealth to keep taking the lead on global issues such as the environment in her Christmas message, according to extracts released Thursday.

(AFP/File/Luis Acosta)

Edinburgh, Prince Charles, the Duchess of Cornwall and Princes William and Harry, as well as hundreds of onlookers hoping to see the royal family. □

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"Avatar" leads box office for second weekend



Cast member Jude Law attends the premiere of "Sherlock Holmes" in New York in this December 17, 2009 file photo.

REUTERS/Finbarr O'Reilly

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) – Reigning champ "Avatar" easily beat newcomer "Sherlock Holmes" at the Christmas holiday box office in North America after a closely followed duel that saw both films post sizzling sales, according to studio estimates issued on Sunday.

"Avatar," a costly 3-D extravaganza from "Titanic" director James Cameron, earned \$75 million during

the three days beginning December 25, said distributor 20th Century Fox.

The film lost just three percent of its opening-weekend audience as its 10-day total soared to \$212.3 million across the United States and Canada.

British director Guy Ritchie's "Sherlock Holmes" followed with \$65.4 million, two days after setting a Christmas Day opening record of \$24.8

million. The film, in which Robert Downey Jr. reinvents the ascetic Victorian sleuth as a dashing superhero, was released by Warner Bros. Pictures. Industry observers had predicted an opening of at least \$50 million.

New at No. 3 was Fox's "Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel," with \$50.2 million for the three days, far exceeding the studio's forecasts. Since opening on Wednesday, the follow-up to the worldwide 2007 hit has earned \$77.1 million. The studio had been hoping for a three-day haul of \$35 million and a five-day sum of about \$50 million.

"It's Complicated," a new Universal Pictures comedy starring Meryl Streep, Alec Baldwin and Steve Martin, was a distant No. 4 with a solid \$22.1 million.

20th Century Fox is a unit of News Corp. Warner Bros. is a unit of Time Warner Inc. Universal Pictures is a unit of General Electric Co. □

Perry to take 'Madea' play on the road in 2010



In this Sept. 13, 2009 photo, Tyler Perry participates in a news conference for the film "Precious" during the Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto. Perry says he is taking his sharp-tongued character "Madea" back on tour.

(AP Photo/Evan Agostini, File)



ATLANTA – Movie producer and actor Tyler Perry says he is taking his sharp-tongued character "Madea" back on tour.

Perry posted a message on his Web site Saturday that said he had taken some time off in the past few months "so I could spend my mother's final days at her side." His mother, Willie Maxine Perry, died Dec. 8 at age 64.

Perry says he will begin touring with his new play, "Madea's Big Happy Family," the iron-willed Southern matriarch he portrays in a wig and padded suit. She is the central character of many of his films, including "Tyler Perry's Madea Goes to Jail."

The actor says he is eager to have Madea on stage for the first time in five years. The first leg of the tour begins Jan. 4 in El Paso, Texas, then goes on to Phoenix, San Diego, Seattle and Portland, Ore. □







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Stocks to wrap up 2009 on high note

By Ellis Mnyandu

NEW YORK (Reuters) – Wall Street is likely to make a strong showing in the final week of 2009 as the bulls gear up to toast the first annual advance for U.S. stocks in two years on hopes of more economic stability in 2010.

The U.S. stock market's resiliency since the March bottom has put investors in the mood to celebrate. The trading week will be cut short by the New Year's Day holiday on Friday, when U.S. financial markets will be closed.

The S&P 500 is poised for what could possibly be its best year since 2003 -- in sharp contrast to a year ago, when stocks plummeted in the fallout from the mortgage crisis and panic rocked investors as 2009 got under way.

Even though no "all clear" has been sounded for the U.S. economy, equity strategists said stocks were poised to add to recent gains this week and build a base for a solid start to 2010 as optimism about the recovery grows.

There is an expectation now that economic indicators will keep showing improvements in key areas like housing and the labor market.

"There's an upward bias," said Alan Lancz, president of Alan B. Lancz & Associates Inc, an investment advisory firm, based in Toledo, Ohio. "Economic numbers have been good. It's been an ideal situation for equities as there aren't that many other alternatives. I think the smarter money is going into equities." The benchmark Standard & Poor's 500 (.SPX) started out November in a tight trading range. But by Christmas Eve, when stock trading ended early for the holiday, the S&P 500 had climbed to a 14-month closing high as investors bet the recovery would be strong enough to justify loftier stock valuations. U.S. markets were closed on Friday for Christmas.

DOUBLE-DIGIT GAINS FOR 2009

The S&P 500 is up 66.5 percent from a 12-year closing low set on March 9. Its trading levels now imply

a forward price/earnings ratio of 15.5, according to Thomson Reuters data. And oh, what a difference a year makes. The S&P 500 ended 2008 down 38.5 percent.

But for 2009, the S&P 500 is up 24.7 percent -- a gain that puts the broad market index on track for what could be its best year since 2003. An even stronger advance this week could put the S&P 500 in position for its best year since 1998.

For 2009, the Dow is up 19.9 percent and the Nasdaq is up 45 percent.

"The market is telling us that the economy is a lot stronger than people are giving it credit" for, said Cleveland Rueckert, a market analyst at Birinyi Associates in Stamford, Connecticut.

Although there might be some profit-taking in the final days of the year, the stock market's underlying tone should still be positive, Reuckert added.

"In our view, the market is going to go higher."

The ritual of window dressing should also support the stock market in the coming week, according to analysts. That strategy involves selling stocks with large losses and buying winners near the end of the year or quarter to improve a portfolio's performance.

"The fact that it's year-end is going to cause a fair amount of volatility on probably relatively light volume," said Michael James, senior trader at regional investment bank Wedbush Morgan in Los Angeles. "I would expect the bias would be to the upside toward the end of the week."

Volatility may be enhanced in a holiday-shortened week, when the U.S. stock market will be open for only four days.

Volume may be exceptionally light, with many market participants taking time off through New Year's Day.

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE ON TAP

Economic and corporate calendars are light this week. But there will be a few items worth keeping an eye on, including the U.S. Treasury's auctions of \$118 billion of

two-year, five-year and seven-year notes.

Investors will watch for how much demand there is for U.S. government debt as efforts to revive the economy pump up government spending.

As the holiday shopping season comes to a close, the Conference Board's index of December consumer confidence will merit Wall Street's attention on Tuesday. The forecast calls for a December reading of 52.3, up from 49.5 in November, according to economists polled by Reuters.

Investors will note the October S&P/Case-Shiller home price index, also due on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, the Institute for Supply Management-Chicago's December index of business activity in the



In this photo provided by Iams, Culver, an orphaned puppy up for adoption, gets some attention from Peter Elkins after representatives of the Helen Woodward Animal Center and the Iams Home 4 the Holidays pet adoption campaign rang the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange Thursday, Dec. 24, 2009, in New York.

(AP Photo/Iams, Jason DeCrow)

U.S. Midwest region is set for release. The median forecast of economists polled by Reuters puts the ISM-Chicago

index at 55.0 in December, down from 56.1 in November. A reading above 50 indicates expansion □

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SPORTS

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NFL Roundup

Brady throws 4 TDs, Pats' 35-7 win earns playoffs

The Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Massachusetts (AP) — Tom Brady threw four touchdown passes, three to Randy Moss, and the young defense put together its third straight solid game as New England beat Jacksonville 35-7 on Sunday, clinching the AFC East and further dimming the Jaguars' slim postseason chances. For the Patriots (10-5), it was another encouraging outing in what had been an inconsistent season. They took the division after missing the playoffs last season for the first time since 2002 despite an 11-5 record. And they did it in a one-sided manner, just like most of their games in the 2007 season when they lost the Super Bowl to the New York Giants 17-14 on a last-minute touchdown. Brady bounced back after throwing for just 307 yards



New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady (12) and New England Patriots wide receiver Randy Moss (81) hug after Moss caught a Brady first-quarter touchdown pass during an NFL football game in Foxborough, Mass., Sunday afternoon, Dec. 27, 2009.

Associated Press

with two touchdowns and two interceptions in his previous two games. He completed 23 of 26 passes for 267 yards, reminiscent of his brilliance the last time the teams met: 26 of 28 for 262 yards with three touchdowns and no interceptions in a 31-20 divisional playoff win on Jan. 12, 2008.

Jacksonville dropped its third straight game and fourth in its last five after going 6-4. New England won its third straight — outscoring the opposition 72-27 — after losing three of four.

Bengals 17, Chiefs 10

In Cincinnati, Carson Palmer's touchdown pass to Chad Ochocinco completed a 98-yard drive in the closing minutes, sending Cincinnati to the AFC North championship at the end of a rough week.

Continued on Page 15



Philadelphia Flyers defenseman Braydon Coburn (5) and teammates celebrate with Danny Briere, third from left, after Briere had the first of the Flyers' two goals in their 2-1 victory over the New York Islanders in their NHL hockey game at Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale, N.Y., Sunday, Dec. 27, 2009. Islanders goalie Martin Biron, foreground, looks on.

Associated Press

By IRA PODELL

AP Hockey Writer UNIONDALE, N.Y. — Jeff Carter snapped a tie in the second period and the Philadelphia Flyers beat the New York Islanders for the 13th straight time, 2-1 on

Sunday night.

The Flyers, who have won three in a row overall for the first time in two months, haven't lost to the Islanders since Feb. 12, 2008. It is the longest active streak in the NHL, one win more than

NHL Roundup

Flyers beat Islanders for 13th straight time

Washington's current 12-game run over Tampa Bay.

Danny Briere scored in the first period to give the Flyers their first lead and he nearly added another goal in the third, but that one was waved off. Video replay determined that Briere steered his own shot in with a skate after the puck hit goalie Martin Biron at the end of a 2-on-1 rush.

The Flyers overcame that and got strong goaltending from Michael Leighton, who stopped 28 saves while making his third consecutive start over Brian Boucher. Philadelphia is 3-0 on its six-game road trip that included a 4-3 shootout win at Carolina on Saturday night. Due to weather, the Flyers didn't arrive in New York until 3:30 a.m. — 13 1/2 hours before the late afternoon puck drop on Long Island. Philadelphia (18-18-2) hadn't

won three straight since a five-game run from Oct. 31-Nov. 12. Its previous two-game spurt before Saturday came on Nov. 16-18.

The Islanders also were looking for a rare three-game winning streak, following victories over Toronto on Wednesday and at the New York Rangers on Saturday. The Islanders are 2-7 in the second half of back-to-back games this season.

Jon Sim's fourth goal of the season brought New York into a tie in the second period, but the Islanders couldn't generate any other offense. Former Flyers goalie Biron made 28 saves but lost his sixth straight decision. New York has dropped nine of 13.

Briere got the seemingly tired Flyers going early. Carter made a strong move through the slot, avoided contact with Islanders defenseman

Andy Sutton, and fed a pass to Briere at the bottom of the right circle for a perfect shot to the top right corner behind Biron on 1:51.

Sim tied it following the benefit of a pair of non-calls when it appeared Flyers defenseman Chris Pronger and New York's Mark Streit both struck the puck with high sticks. The second carom off of Streit sent the puck to Sim, who made it 1-1 at 3:35 of the second.

That set the stage for Carter. Scott Hartnell skated with the puck on Carter's right during a 2-on-1 break. Hartnell calmly slid a soft pass across to Carter, who waited for Biron to make a move before lifting a shot over him with 3:07 left in the second. Carter has three goals in six games after recording only two in the previous 11. □

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Meyer expects to be leading Gators in '10

By MARK LONG

AP Sports Writer

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Florida coach Urban Meyer is taking an indefinite leave of absence instead of resigning and expects to be on the sideline leading the Gators when next season opens.

"I do in my gut believe that will happen," Meyer said Sunday at a Sugar Bowl news conference.

Offensive coordinator Steve Addazio will run the team during Meyer's absence, but Meyer will be the coach against No. 4 Cincinnati on New Year's Day.

"It's full speed ahead. We're going to do everything possible to win this game," he said.

Less than 24 hours after resigning because of health concerns, Meyer changed his mind. He said he was offered and encouraged to take a leave of absence earlier in the week by the university president. Sunday, after conferring with athletic director Jeremy Foley and his family he "accepted the offer to improve my health." The 45-year-old Meyer said being with his players at a "spirited practice" Sunday morning persuaded him not to resign.

"To not try would not be the right thing to do," he said.

On Saturday night, Meyer shocked college football when he said he was stepping down after five seasons as Gators coach.

After the Southeastern Conference championship game three weeks ago, Meyer spent several hours in a Gainesville, Fla., hospital because of chest pains.

Meyer said Sunday he had experienced similar problems at times this season but had not had a heart attack. However, he would not elaborate on

his physical condition. When asked if doctors advised him to stop coaching, Meyer again declined to answer.

Meyer is married with three children—the oldest recently started college at Georgia Tech.

Foley said when he went to sleep Saturday night he did not think there was any chance Meyer would change his mind.

"It was a long night for everybody in Gator nation," Foley said. "The intent here is to make sure Urban goes and deals with the issues we discussed last night."

Gators quarterback Tim Tebow said he and several of his teammates cried when they found out that Meyer was stepping down on Saturday and were elated when he told them he changed his mind.

"We want him to do what's best for him," Tebow said. "We want him to get himself right, and when he's right then come back to coaching, then get back into ball."

Tebow will be playing his last game in the Sugar Bowl against an unbeaten Cincinnati team that will be led by an interim coach. Brian Kelly left the Bearcats earlier this month to take over at Notre Dame.

It sounds as if Florida won't have to worry about playing games with an interim coach any time soon.

Meyer is 56-10 with Florida, including 32-8 in the SEC and a school-record 22-game winning streak that was snapped by the Crimson Tide in the conference title game on Dec. 5.

Last month, Sports Illustrated chronicled Meyer's coaching career and reported that he suffered from persistent headaches caused by a cyst that becomes inflamed by stress, rage and excitement.

Meyer told the magazine that since the diagnosis in the early 2000s he has tried to stay composed during games.

A tireless recruiter and creative motivator, Meyer came to Florida from Utah in fall 2004 amid speculation he would end up at Notre Dame.

Meyer brought most of his staff with him—some of whom worked with him at Bowling Green (2001-02) and Utah (2003-04). Together, they restored the program to national prominence two years later with the school's second national championship.

The Gators upset Ohio State 41-14 in Glendale, Ariz.; they won another one last January by beating Oklahoma 24-14



in Miami.

With just about his entire team returning this fall, Meyer spent all season coaching under intense pressure and sky-high expectations. He said he welcomed it all as the defending national champions tried to become just the second team in the

last 14 years to repeat.

But the season was far from smooth. Florida dealt with distraction after distraction, prompting Meyer to call it "the year of stuff."

"I had a 30-year coaching career in nine years," Meyer said. "You just can't do that." □



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NBA Roundup

Bosh, Bargnani lead Raptors past Pistons, 102-95

Toronto Raptors forward Chris Bosh (4) drives between Detroit Pistons forward Charlie Villanueva, left, and guard Rodney Stuckey (3) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Toronto on Sunday, Dec. 27, 2009.

Associated Press

TORONTO – Chris Bosh had 25 points and 16 rebounds, Jarrett Jack scored 17 points and the Toronto Raptors extended their winning streak to a season-high four games, beating the Detroit Pistons 102-95 on Sunday.

Even with Richard Hamilton, Tayshaun Prince and Ben Gordon all back in the lineup, the Pistons couldn't stop their losing streak from reaching seven games. Detroit has not topped 100 points in any of those defeats.

Hamilton and Gordon each scored 15 and Jonas Jerebko and Rodney Stuckey both had 14 for the Pistons. Ben Wallace had 10 points and nine rebounds.

The Raptors, who hammered the Pistons 94-64 in Detroit on Wednesday, came out firing again in this one, leading 60-41 at the half, but had to hold on in the fourth after the Pistons staged a furious comeback. Andrea Bargnani scored 16 points and Hedo Turkoglu added 14 for

the Raptors, who improved to 12-0 when holding opponents below 100 points.

It's the first time that Toronto has won three games over the Pistons in a season in the team's 15-year history. The Raptors beat the Pistons 110-99 in Toronto on Nov. 4.

Detroit trailed 74-69 after three, but Prince got the Pistons to within 85-84 on a turnaround jumper with 5:47 left in the fourth. Detroit got the ball back after an offensive foul by Bosh, but Stuckey and Jerebko both missed jumpers.

At the other end, Bargnani converted a three-point play, with Jerebko fouling out. Gordon missed a jumper and Bargnani scored again, making it 90-84 with 4:00 remaining.

Two free throws from Gordon made it 95-91 with 33 seconds left but Jack went 4 for 4 at the line in the closing seconds to seal the win.

Hamilton, who had missed 26 of the

previous 28 games with a sore right hamstring, and Prince, out since Oct. 31 with a sore back, each started for just the fourth time of the season. Gordon, out since Dec. 6 with a sore left ankle, came off the bench for Detroit.

Toronto used an 11-2 run to lead 29-22 after one, with no Pistons player making more than one field goal in the opening quarter and the team's first seven baskets each scored by a different player.

Detroit continued to shoot poorly in the second, finishing at 33 percent (14 for 43) in the first half while Toronto shot 62 percent (21 for 34). Bosh scored 11 points in the second and had 19 at the half as the Raptors led 60-41.

Toronto went cold in the third, making just 4 of 14 field goals and going 4 for 9 at the line as Detroit surged back, shooting 11 for 19 in the quarter. Jerebko scored 10 points in the third as the Pistons cut it to 74-69 heading into the fourth. □



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NFL ROUNDUP

Continued from Page 12

The Bengals (10-5) moved into the playoffs for only the second time in the past 19 years after dealing with the death of receiver Chris Henry. The teary practices and locker-room grief seemed to show against the Chiefs (3-12), who stayed close in a mistake-filled game. One good drive at the end was enough.

Cincinnati took over at its 2-yard line with 9:21 to go and put together its longest drive of the season. On the 14th play, Palmer threw a 6-yard touchdown pass to Ochocinco, who ran to the stands and touched a poster of Henry. Fans chanted "Who Dey!" after Matt Cassel's final pass was intercepted and a burst of snow fell on a cold, raw day that matched the mood. Palmer threw for a pair of touchdowns, and Cedric Benson ran for 133 yards in an offense that managed only two drives all day.

Packers 48, Seahawks 10

In Green Bay, Wisconsin, the Packers secured a spot in the playoffs, forcing four interceptions by Matt Hasselbeck and then getting a big boost from the Carolina Panthers.

Sunday's victory, combined with the New York Giants' blowout loss to Carolina, put the Packers (10-5) back in the postseason after going 6-10 last season and getting off to a disappointing 4-4 start this year.

It was Hasselbeck's second straight four-interception

game in what is shaping up as a miserable season for the Seahawks (5-10), who have scored a total of 24 points in three straight losses. Hasselbeck also was picked off four times in a loss to Tampa Bay last week.

Several Packers players, including Charles Woodson and Greg Jennings, acknowledged fans during a lap around the stadium after the game.

Panthers 41, Giants 9

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Matt Moore and the Panthers turned the Giants' farewell to Giants Stadium into one of their ugliest moments in franchise history. Playing in front of Lawrence Taylor—possibly their greatest player — and knowing they still had a shot at a fifth straight playoff berth, the Giants (8-7) embarrassed themselves against the Panthers, a team

with nothing at stake. Moore threw three touchdown passes, Jonathan Stewart rushed for a career-best 206 yards and the Panthers (7-8) shredded New York's defense with scores on six of their first seven possessions before a disgusted final sellout crowd Sunday.

The Giants' postseason chances are microscopic. After stating the season 5-0, New York would have to beat Minnesota next week and hope Dallas lost its final two games, starting on Sunday night against Washington.

Moore found Carolina's Steve Smith for a 27-yard TD on the opening possession of the third quarter, but Smith hurt his left arm and had to leave.

Steelers 23, Ravens 20

In Pittsburgh, Jeff Reed's 38-yard field goal put Pittsburgh ahead with 5:25 remaining and the Steelers finally managed to hold a fourth-quarter lead to



Buffalo Bills wide receiver Terrell Owens (81) tries to evade the tackle of Atlanta Falcons safety Thomas DeCoud (28) during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 27, 2009, in Atlanta. Atlanta won 31-3.

Associated Press

remain in playoff contention and further jumble the AFC postseason race.

The Steelers (8-7), their season seemingly ended by a late-season five-game losing

streak, won their second in a row. They go into the final weekend with a chance to sneak into the playoffs if they win at Miami and get some help. □

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Jets end Colts' pursuit of perfection 29-15

By **MICHAEL MAROT**

AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indianapolis Colts kept saying a perfect season didn't matter. Apparently it didn't. Coach Jim Caldwell pulled Peyton Manning and a handful of other starters for the previously unbeaten Colts in the third quarter, and the Jets took advantage by rallying for a 29-15 victory that ended the NFL's longest regular-season winning streak at 23 games.

With Manning on the sideline, helmet on and standing next to his offensive coordinator, the Colts (14-1) lost for the first time since Oct. 27, 2008, at Tennessee, ending a franchise-record 13-game winning streak at home.

"It was the plan, the organizational philosophy that we were going with," Manning said, "and, as players, we support that."

The Jets (8-7) took control of their playoff destiny with the victory, and would make the postseason for the first time since 2006 with a win next week at home against AFC North champion Cincinnati. Caldwell made the move to sit Manning & Co. after taking a 15-10 lead with 5:36 left in the third quarter, focused on a Super Bowl run rather than regular-season perfection. But to the fans at Lucas Oil Stadium, who wanted to send players to Buffalo with a chance to match New England's perfect 2007 regular season, it clearly mattered.

On the second series the starters sat out, fans started booing. The boos grew louder with each play, reaching a crescendo when Manning's replacement, Curtis Painter, was hit by Calvin Pace while setting to throw and lost the ball. Jets defensive end



Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning, right, rubs his head on the sidelines after being taken out in the second half of an NFL football game against the New York Jets in Indianapolis, Sunday, Dec. 27, 2009. The Jets won 29-15.

Associated Press

Final proposal by Pacquiao camp

By **TIM DAHLBERG**

AP Boxing Writer

LAS VEGAS — Promoter Bob Arum delivered what he said would be his last proposal Sunday to salvage the fight between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr., which has been on life support over a blood testing dispute. Under Arum's proposal, the Nevada Athletic Commission would have the final say in how much testing there would be for the fight and when it would take place. Preparations for the fight would go forward and there would be three blood tests — none within 30 days of the fight — unless the commission decided otherwise at a mid-January meeting.

"We will go along with what the Nevada commission decides. We will give them a blank check," Arum said. "We want this fight to go forward."

Arum said Pacquiao's side would go no further than the proposal, and that he will begin negotiations Monday with Paul Malignaggi for the March 13 date the megafight was supposed to take place on.

The position is tougher than earlier statements by those in Pacquiao's camp that there could be a compromise on blood testing if it is not done by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency and in the final days before the fight. It leaves the

fate of the fight in jeopardy since there would likely be little appetite by Nevada regulators to go beyond the urine tests now required by state law.

The director of the Nevada commission and Mayweather's representatives did not immediately return phone calls Sunday. All other issues were earlier resolved, but the nasty dispute over attempts by Mayweather's camp to introduce stringent blood testing to pro boxing for the first time make it increasingly unlikely it will happen.

Mayweather's representatives backed off their insistence on using the USADA over the weekend, but continued to insist on random blood and urine tests with a cutoff date mutually agreeable to both sides.

Pacquiao's camp seemed willing to agree to that up until the last few days when the conversation turned from testing to slander lawsuits against those alleging that Pacquiao used performance-enhancing drugs to move up in weight to win titles in seven different weight classes.

"It's all either a smokescreen because Mayweather doesn't want to do the fight or an attempt by (Mayweather promoter) Richard Schaefer to smear Manny Pacquiao," Arum said. "We will deal with that legally." □

Marques Douglas fell on it and rolled into the end zone for the go-ahead score with 1:29 left in the third quarter.

And with Manning, Reggie Wayne, Dallas Clark and Joseph Addai out, that was all the Jets needed to take over. New York sealed it with two fourth-quarter scores — a 43-yard field goal from Jay Feely and a 1-yard TD run from Thomas Jones.

As the clock wound down, some fans were silent and many left. Those who stayed booed as players shook hands, an odd way to end the record-setting 23-game streak.

"I'm disappointed," Manning said. "There were some chances, I think, to do some things better out there. The turnover and the kickoff return, those are plays that we haven't given up this year and when you do, it's hard to win.

So we've got some things to get corrected and that will be the plan starting tomorrow." The Colts' downfall began at the start of the second half when Brad Smith fielded Pat McAfee's kick 6 yards into the end zone, ran it out, found a seam along the right side and then raced down the sidelines. He even managed to stay in bounds after getting hit at about the Colts 20, going 106 yards to give the Jets a 10-9 lead.

It was the longest return in Jets history and tied for the second-longest win NFL history with three others. Only Ellis Hobbs' 108-yard kickoff return against the Jets in 2007 was longer.

But the Colts came right back. They moved 81 yards, the last coming when Donald Brown bounced off two Jets defenders and scooted into the end zone to make it 15-10 with 10:13 left in the third quarter. Brown's conversion run failed. □

Secret Santa visits Radisson



Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa managers congregated at the resort's rooftop penthouse suite to exchange gifts and informally celebrate the season.

Page B2

Maduro Travel celebrates the holidays



PALM BEACH – Daniel's Steak & Chop entertained Maduro Travel for a festive holiday lunch this week. The restaurant, family member of Gianni's Garden, Azzurro and Sole Mare, has become a Palm Beach culinary landmark, this year, with more and more patrons discovering its commitment to outstanding hospitality and best steaks, Certified Angus Beef, dry-aged for maximum tenderness and flavor.

Pages B8 & 9

Broadway star Kiril Kulish talks about Aruba's beaches, ballet and being Billy Elliot



By Rosalie Klein
ARUBA TODAY
ORANJESTAD - Taking a busman's holiday on Aruba over the Christmas season is Kiril Kulish, this year's Best Actor Tony award winner for his starring turn in the smash hit, "Billy Elliot." The show made history by garnering 15 Tony nominations, and danced away with 10 trophies, including Best Musical.

Kiril is enjoying the holidays on Aruba with his mother, Raisa, but still working hard preparing for his role as the Nutcracker/Prince in Leonid Kozlov's production of Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite. He will star in two performances, the first tomorrow December 30, and a short program of excerpts on Saturday, January 2 combined with the world premiere of a special program devised specifically for Kiril

by Leonid Kozlov, which will showcase the many talents of this multi-faceted young star.

RK: How old were you when you started dancing?

KK: I started playing piano at the age of 5; dancing ballet when I was 6, ballroom dancing at 7.

RK: What was the feeling that most dominated you during your time on Broadway and starring in the #1 musical "Billy Elliot"?

KK: I suppose a sense of wonder- it was such an amazing experience; I never even thought of being on Broadway or working with Elton John.

To perform on stage for thousands of people, every night, is beyond description, a joy to an artist in ways I never imagined.

RK: What was it like to work with Elton John?

KK: I think he has remarkable natural talent, the way he knows how to modulate between chords and composition definitely taught me something. I have always loved his music; to work with him in person so many times was amazing for me.

RK: Did you have many teenage girls screaming over you? How did it feel to suddenly become the focus of avid fans – did you get much correspondence?

KK: Oh, yes, lots of fan mail; people sending me gifts all the time, after awhile you get used to it, but it was pretty strange at first.

Signing autographs at the stage door; you get accustomed, and the admiration is very nice, but not the most important thing for me, now that I have left the show, I am not really missing that or the demanding schedule; I am looking forward to new projects.

RK: There were three "Billys;" how often did you perform?

Continued on Page B5



Secret Santa visits Radisson



PALM BEACH — The Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa managers congregated at the resort's rooftop penthouse suite to exchange gifts and informally celebrate the season. General Manager Rob Smith welcomed his department heads and thanked them for the warm reception he's received since October, when he assumed the general manager's position at the hotel. Smith went on to thank



a number of key people who facilitated that transition period and helped him 'hit the ground running,' get off to a brisk and successful start at the eve of the island's busy winter season. Managers enjoyed the often-comical random assignment of other members of management to whom they anonymously gave a gift, and got a kick out of the guessing game leading to the reveal of the identity of the gift-giving colleague. The gathering also recognized the extra efforts of managers Henri Barrau, Juan Semerel



and Angelique Croes during the past quarter-year. Chief of Security Henri Barrau was lauded as manager of the quarter, for his contributions to the resort's clockwork operation. Pictured here some unique gift-unwrapping styles and recognition of excellence, over cocktails and hors d'oeuvres



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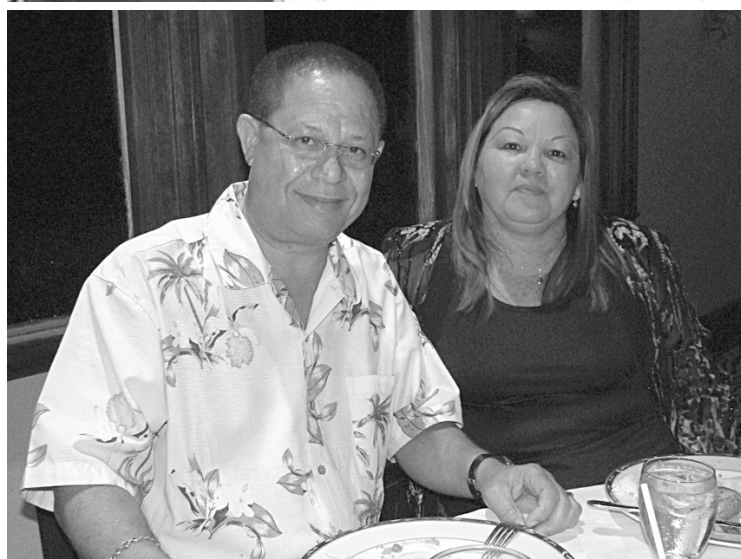
ORANJESTAD

- The office team at PricewaterhouseCoopers enjoyed a special Christmas lunch at Chez Matilde Grand Old House Restaurant. Partner Edsel Lopez reflected on the true meaning of the holiday when he touched on the religious aspect of the day as well as the social component, bringing people together, in forgiving, loving and charitable state of mind. Lopez went on to mention the many events organized at the office this year, among them a number of free-of-charge educational and informative seminars designed to benefit clients, as well as sponsored activities. He went on to wish outgoing team members success, and concluded by expressing aspirations for a healthy 2010, blessed by strong partnership and connected thinking. The culinary team at Chez Mathilde delivered an excellent menu made up of famed house specialties, starting with Duck Breast Salad or Potato Garlic Soup, with a refreshing fruit sherbet between courses, and Tournedos Béarnaise or Pan Seared Grouper Filet as main courses chased by fresh fruit and Champagne Sabayon paired with Coconut Ice Cream for dessert. PricewaterhouseCoopers provides industry-focused assurance, tax and advisory services to build public trust and enhance value for their clients and their stakeholders. More than 163,000 people in 151 countries across the company network share their thinking, experience and solutions to develop fresh perspectives and practical advice. □

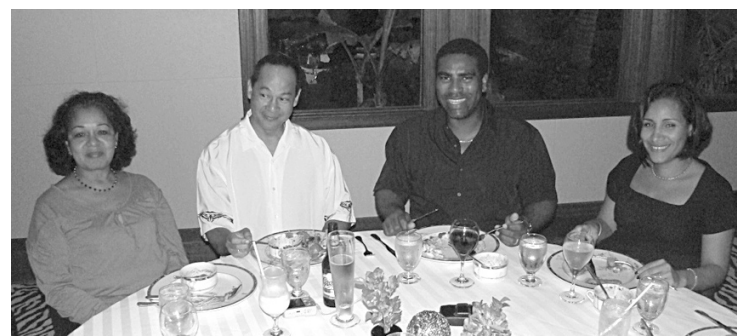


At Ventanas del Mar

Sagicor hosts a holiday party



TIERRADELSOL-- The local branch of Sagicor Financial Corporation, a company providing financial services in the Caribbean, enjoyed the now fully renovated Ventanas del Mar Restaurant when it hosted an elegant country-club celebration in honor of forty-five company employees. Executive Chef Jim Roosman, orchestrated a festive holiday buffet served by General Manager Martin Haselhoeft and his crew, to sweet steel pan music.



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Broadway star Kiril Kulish talks about Aruba's beaches, ballet and being Billy Elliot

Continued from Page B1

KK: Usually four times a week, but even after the show opened we rehearsed every day, so I worked from 9 in the morning to 11 at night, every day. If one of us "Billys" was injured or sick, another had to take over, I had one week where I was doing every show.

RK: What did you find the most demanding aspect of performing?

KK: Simply the stamina we needed to keep up the energy through a 3-hour show; as the lead I was in nearly every scene and it was exhausting. Also, I was not a singer before "Billy Elliot" that was something new for me, as well as acting and mastering the English Working-class accent. There was so much to learn for the show, but that is also one of the best aspects of my time on Broadway-all that I learned and took away with me from the experience.

RK: Any really funny or

memorable moments you recall in particular?

KK: Performing live means lots of "bloopers," and we can't do retakes! I remember one night, during a key scene, when I open the letter to see I have been accepted at the ballet academy, I dropped the envelope and it fell into a crack where I couldn't retrieve it! We had this board game on the set, I tried using the instruction book from that, and I discovered it was just a prop and glued shut! The audience had gasped when I dropped the letter, they knew it wasn't part of the script; finally Greg, who played my dad, is going "psst, psst," and he slips me a paper to read. When things like that happen, we think we have screwed up, but we found the audience loved it; they applauded even more and would tell me at the stage door afterwards what a great job I did handling those moments, how professional I was."



RK: Any crazy fan stories?

KK: Not so many, though one sticks out. After a matinee performance I was going to get a bite to eat with one of the girls from the show and this man, perhaps 50 or so, stopped me outside the stage door for a photograph. Right there on the street he starts taking off his shirt, which was strange enough, but then he shows us that all over his body he has tattooed the names of various Broadway shows. On his back, he had the names of my fellow Billys, Trent and David, but of me he has a full face tattoo, which was an incredible likeness and another of me during the dream sequence when I fly around the stage. He was insistent the girl with me take a picture of me standing next to him with his back to the camera so you could see me and those tattoos. THAT was weird.

RK: This is your second time in Aruba, what do you enjoy most about performing here?

KK: When Leonid asked me if I would like to do the show again, I immediately said yes; I remember enjoying the island so much, two years ago. Everywhere I went the people were so friendly and nice, it was always a joy to see how happy people were; I have experienced it in other places, but here it is so much more sincere-they all are so warm



and really friendly. I thought the island was so beautiful too, and I have really been looking forward to coming here.

RK: How do you feel about the new program Leonid Kozlov created just for you?

KK: I am very excited about the new program, we have been rehearsing for months now; it not only allows me to show off my ballroom dancing, but I am learning new moves, and this show has me reaching for new levels of dance, so this always good.

RK: What are you looking forward to most about Aruba?

KK: All the water sports I can fit in, I love that blue, blue water and want to do everything I can; I couldn't wait to get to the beach and feel the sun when we first arrived.

RK: What was the most important thing you took away

with you from your Billy Elliot experience?

KK: I think the most important thing was all the new things, the acting, the new dance techniques I had to learn, which I believe will help me in the future. In particular working with the talented people I met and how they inspired me; that was the best part of it all.

"The Nutcracker" is being staged for two nights only at Occidental Grand Resort in Palm Beach; curtain rises promptly at 8:00 PM. Tickets are \$20 per person, and can be purchased in the resort lobby or at Van Dorp newsstands in the Holiday Inn, Divi and Tamarijn resorts.

For full information and a video of Kiril discussing his upcoming performance visit: <http://business-aruba.com/press/?p=1176>

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HUMAN HINTS

Fundamentals 1 – Know What You Want

When we first learn something, we learn the basics. Our knowledge then expands and grows more complex as we delve deeper into a subject. At first a deeper understanding helps us make more sophisticated decisions more quickly. As our knowledge becomes more complex however, it is easy to forget the basics. For the next few days, we'll get back to the basics of three dimensional manifestation. We'll talk about how to consciously direct your life toward any goal and how to

feel good about your efforts at the end of each day. Lets get started.

Manifestation begins with Desire, but unfocused and incorrectly-focused Desire wastes energy and causes frustration.

We all have Desire, but how many of us truly know what we want?

If your daily demands disappeared, how would you choose to spend your time? Where would you choose to put your energy? What would you pursue? How would you challenge

yourself? What actions and emotions would fill your days?

In order to strive for something, you have to know what you want. If you don't know what you want, start with a general idea of what your perfect life will be like in 3 years. Imagine your future just the way you want it, then narrow down the details.

Take your mind in any direction. In your future life, what thoughts make you smile? Where does your sense of contentment come from? What do you strive for? Where are your challenges?

What are the details of your daily life? Before you

know it, you'll have a clear idea of what you want your future to be like.

To help define your goal, look for your Passionate Emotion. What thrills you? What breaks your heart? What efforts and actions are you engrossed in, when Time disappears? This will tell you where to direct your energy, and that will help you define your goals. It is OK if you don't have very specific goals at first.

Your goals and your life will become more defined in each moment as you travel down your Path of Passion.

If it all sounds like fluff at this point, remember that three dimensional

manifestation begins in the human imagination.

Knowing what we want is the first step to getting it. A conscious goal is the first step toward directing your life because it acts as a directional beacon for your thoughts, emotions and actions. Without a goal in mind, our thoughts emotions and actions can contradict and counteract each other.

When they act together, they build on each other's efforts, creating a powerful unified force propelling us to where we want to go.

Tomorrow we will explore how to use your Imagination to align your emotions with your desires.

Until Tomorrow...

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~Quentin Danziger

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought.


HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

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The Brazilian-style steakhouse also offers a garden full of healthy eats on a lavish 40-item seasonal salad bar, giving dieters plenty to choose from to accompany the

slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but Texas de Brazil's version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portabella mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, homemade soups, and much more.

The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking to splurge while on vacation, Texas de Brazil will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal.

**Restaurant
open daily**

Monday - Sat 6 pm - 11 pm
Sunday 5 pm - 11 pm

For more information or to make reservations, please call 586-4686. ☐



MENU ITEMS

Burgers, Pizzas, Salads
Sandwiches, Wraps
Wings & Calamari

HAPPY HOUR

Every day from:
5 - 6 pm

OPENING HOURS

Daily 9 am - 12 am

WEBSITE

WWW.BUGALOE.COM

CRAZY FISH MONDAY @ BUGALOE

Fresh 18oz Snapper or Grouper for only \$ 20

PALM BEACH - Fresher than fresh, is the motto of the popular Bugaloe Beach Bar & Grill at De Palm Pier. Caught in the morning, served at night... That's the Bugaloe way!

Chef Marc Hernandez is proudly presenting his rich platter with an 18oz Red Snapper or Grouper, a choice depending on the catch of that day. "Bugaloe is known for fun and craziness, so it was just a logical step for me to go crazy with this colorful pallet

of exquisite fish, yellow rice and rich vegetables," Chef Marc says. With a smile he adds "And that just for US\$ 20!"

And right he is, as the platter has been a hit from the start. Served with a bottle of white wine this fish feast is truly a delight on your Monday night.

Bugaloe is located at De Palm Pier in Palm Beach between RIU Palace and Radisson Resort.

OPENING HOURS

Bugaloe Beach Bar and Grill is open daily from 9am till midnight. You may go there for a casual lunch or dinner and on Mondays the special is served from 5:30pm till 10:00pm. Reservations are not needed... just follow the good music, the fun and the smiles on the beach and you will know where Bugaloe is.



SALSA WORKSHOP

Always wanted to learn how to dance Salsa? Well, you will get your chance on Wednesday evening. Reggie and Sabine from ArubaSalsa will show you the moves of Latin

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J. E. Irausquin Blvd 79 at De Palm Pier • Tel: (297) 5862233 • Website: www.bugaloe.com • Email: info@bugaloe.com

Maduro Travel celebrates the holidays



PALM BEACH – Daniel's Steak & Chop entertained Maduro Travel for a festive holiday lunch



this week. The restaurant, family member of Gianni's Garden, Azzurro and Sole Mare, has become a Palm Beach culinary landmark, this year, with more and more patrons discovering its commitment to outstanding hospitality and best steaks, Certified Angus Beef, dry-aged for maximum tenderness and flavor. Maduro Travel employees enjoyed a friendly, classic steakhouse menu in the nicely decorated dining room, in celebration of the season. □

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 \$ 169 p.p. for the beach party AND penthouse countdown
 Reserve early, dinner reservation limited

Roof Top Penthouse Countdown Party

10 to 1:30 p.m.
 Premium Open Bar,
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Live entertainment with Honey Pot
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SUNSET GRILLE:
 Our elegant AAA Four Diamond Restaurant menu is offered from 6 to 9:30 p.m., a la carte. Reservation required

Laguna RESTAURANT:
 Fun, festive family buffet serving NY Prime Rib, Shrimp Scampi, Caribbean Grilled Chicken Breast with Citrus Sauce, Aruban Seafood Chowder, salad bar, dessert selection, and much more... from 5 to 10 p.m., including party favors. Reservation suggested, \$28 p.p.

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The French Steakhouse delivers dining under the stars



Eagle Beach – The French Steakhouse at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa just added another charming dining option, a tropical outdoor courtyard, featuring delicious cuisine under the

stars.

The famed French Steakhouse prides itself on the elegant dining experience it offers patrons in the fully air-conditioned dining room. Yet recently the idea of adding a garden spot to the existing blueprint began to sprout in the creative mind of Executive Chef George Hoek, and he immediately recruited the landscapers to create the intimate, lovely setting.

The French Steakhouse Ooh-La-La menu is now served indoor and alfresco, featuring creative appetizers, soups, salads, seafood dishes, poultry and the Pièce de Résistance South American & USDA Beef specialties.

Among popular appetizers the chef's Tropical Crab Cakes with pineapple & mango salsa and the Teriyaki Glazed Seared Duck Breast, served with garden greens and balsamic dressing, are real crowd pleasers.

True to the restaurant's French roots, the Onion Soup is a classic, while the Honey Glazed Salmon Salad winks at the exotic East with a sweet soy dressing.

The menu features a great variety of seafood dishes from fresh fish to the totally sinful and amazingly-decadent Caribbean Stuffed Shrimp with Crabmeat and Bacon, which became an instant hit. The tequila and sweet chili glaze, lends the Jumbo shrimp a pure taste of heaven!

The French Steakhouse is naturally famous for the South American Churrasco steak, a signature preparation, which now shares the stage with juicy



USDA beef specialties such as NY Sirloin and Filet Mignon.

Light-eaters will find the Jerk Chicken Skewers and the Lemon Herb Broilers very satisfying.

Open seven days a week from 5:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. the French Steakhouse is blessed with the nicest staff and a delightfully renovated dining room with sparkling China, crisp linen, an interesting bread basket, colossal desserts and live jazz on piano with Eddy Samson who is Aruba's best entertainer, and a walking & breathing music encyclopedia, just whistle the tune, and Eddy will produce a symphonic version of your favorite song.

Hungry patrons will appreciate the Ambassador's 5-course menu featuring the run of the menu highlights for just \$34.95 per person. www.manchebo.com steakhouse

Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar reinvents Beach Cuisine



Eagle Beach – Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa is widely recognized as the home of Beach Cuisine.

Executive Chef George Hoek and his culinary team serve a Sun Splashed menu on the ocean front terrace, raising the restaurant to a must-visit, must-try status.

The contemporary menu, lists many favorite dishes from around the world, borrowing inspiration from US, Mexican, Thai, Jamaican, Cuban, Greek and Mediterranean kitchens, all served with a tropical, Caribbean flair.

From Sun-Sational Salads, to Cuban pressed jawbreakers and wraps, mid-day platters also include oversize Beef Burgers, Philly Cheese Steak Sandwiches and Hot Dogs.

The Pega Pega tropical &

frozen cocktail list, with fresh fruit or ice cream smoothies, margaritas, leaves nothing out, including Yellow Birds, Sex daiquiris, coladas and on the Beach and Mudslides,



making a lunch-time brain-freeze, extremely easy to get! The Pega Pega, one of Aruba oldest beach bars is open on fabulous Eagle Beach, with

unrivaled views, caring, gracious service, and relaxed atmosphere, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. The bar is open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano introduces Menu Turistico



Eagle Beach -- Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano located at the heart of the low-rise hotels at the Manchebo Beach Resort &

Spa, delivers authentic Mediterranean flavors, at a reasonable price.

The restaurant has just introduced Menu Turistico a three-course dinner featuring appetizers, main courses and desserts for just \$19.95, per person, plus 15% service charge.

Patrons may choose between home made soup and Caesar salad, Fettuccini Alfredo, Lasagna Casarecia, Spaghetti alla Bolognese or any favorite pizza with Tiramisu, Cheese Cake or Ice Cream for the sweet finale.

Executive Chef George Hoek is the resort's much-appreciated culinary expert. He was the recent recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by the Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association in collaboration with the Digicel Group. Chef George accepted the Shoco Award, the national award of excellence, and Aruba's top professional decoration, in the tourism industry. □

Adopt a dog and make yourself happy



ORANJESTAD - For those who love dogs, nothing beats coming home and being greeted by wagging tails and happy dog faces. It makes your day and lifts you up when you are down. On Aruba there are many dogs waiting to be adopted: cute, healthy animals, who would love to have a home and a house to

guard. So, as December is the time to give to others, think about adopting a dog and make yourself a happy person in the process. For more information, please call Animal Rights Aruba, 587-3938/743-0947 - Ditte de Waard. Below you find descriptions of Whity & Negro, both terrific canines.

Whity is a strapping, 8 month-

old fellow. Still a little bit on the shy side, he has all the characteristics to be a fantastic dog to a fantastic family. He is a sweetheart.

Negro: An 8 month-old doggy, dark in color, hence the name Negro. He is sweet tempered, with a soft heart and very well-behaved. Negro may be a little bit shy at first, but that might disappear very soon indeed if he gets enough attention and love. □



14-year-old may get to sail world after all



A 14-year-old Dutch girl may be allowed to set sail on a solo around the world voyage after all.

A Dutch court has allowed Laura Dekker - who holds dual Dutch-New Zealand citizenship - to stay in her father's care following her disappearance last week, and has laid out conditions to allow the teenage sailor to begin her trip, possibly within three months.

The court's judges said this would provide a chance for Dekker to prove herself ready for the challenge, DutchNews.nl has reported.

Dekker will now be expected to complete a first aid course and make several of sailing trips abroad in order to prepare.

Dekker disappeared last December 17, months after welfare authorities forced her to postpone her attempt to become the youngest person to sail solo around the world.

She was found on the island of St Martin in the Dutch Antilles, where her lawyer said, she was trying to buy a boat; she was flown home on Tuesday.

After her disappearance last week, the welfare authorities had sought to have her removed from her home and placed in a crisis shelter. □

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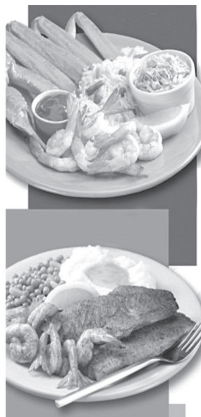
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Tipline di Polis	11141
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Ambulance	584-5050
Warda Polis	584-5000
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WK 2	1 BDRM	L 48	\$16,000.	GROUND FL
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WK 1	STUDIO	503	\$14,000.	5TH FL POOL/O
WK 2	STUDIO	115	\$11,000.	1ST FL POOL
WK 1	2 BDRM	352	\$35,000.	3RD FL P/O/F
WK 2	2 BDRM	117	\$31,500	1ST FL P/O/F
WK 3	2BDRM	RL 60	\$40,000.	GROUND FL

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Canal Teleamazonas de Ecuador vuelve al aire tras sanción

QUITO (Reuters) - El canal de televisión privado de Ecuador Teleamazonas, cuya señal fue suspendida por tres días, regresó el viernes al aire tras cumplir una sanción impuesta por un ente estatal, que despertó duras críticas en el país.

El medio, crítico al presidente izquierdista Rafael Correa, fue sancionado el martes por la Superintendencia de Telecomunicaciones, que lo acusó de haber difundido una noticia meses atrás sin tener un sustento.

Tras retomar su señal, el medio transmitió normalmente su programación con un mensaje a sus televidentes



Manifestantes protestan frente de la estación de televisión Teleamazonas en Quito, 22 dic 2009. Decenas de ecuatorianos se apostaban el miércoles en las inmediaciones del canal privado Teleamazonas para pedir respeto a la libertad de expresión en el país, mientras el Gobierno defendía la decisión de suspender temporalmente al medio de comunicación. REUTERS/Juan Jose Franco

sobre el trabajo que realizan para la comunidad.

La suspensión del canal levantó duras críticas en la opinión pública, ya que en la víspera de la aplicación de la medida la Asamblea debatía un polémico proyecto de comunicación que podría normar la existencia de una comisión sancionadora de medios. Correa, quien mantiene una agria disputa con algunos medios privados, defendió la sanción a Teleamazonas y negó haber pedido la suspensión temporal como argumentaban sus directivos.

El canal presentó demandas en cortes locales a la resolución de la Superintendencia. □

Cerca de 600 evacuados por inundaciones en Argentina

BUENOS AIRES (Reuters) - Cerca de 600 argentinos fueron evacuados y un total de 3.000 se vieron afectados por una inundación que el domingo mantenía obstruidas varias rutas de la provincia de Buenos Aires.

El anegamiento se produjo como consecuencia de una fuerte crecida del río Areco, en el norte de Buenos Aires, que desbordó e inundó las calles de la ciudad de San Antonio de Areco.

La población afectada se encuentra en una zona agropecuaria muy fértil -a poco más de 100 kilómetros de la ciudad de Buenos Aires- que pocas veces se inunda, por lo que el fenómeno llamó la atención de las autoridades.

“Hay gente muy desesperada con esta situación imprevista, estamos tratando de dilucidar el origen porque no tiene ningún antecedente histórico semejante caudal de agua que haya desembocado en pleno centro de San Antonio de Areco”, señaló el gobernador de Buenos Aires, Daniel Scioli, según la agencia DyN.

La televisión argentina mostró imágenes de algunos campos y carreteras cubiertos de agua, mientras que pobladores de San Antonio de Areco aseguraron que muchos perjudicados por el desastre permanecieron en sus casas -algunos sobre los techos- para impedir intentos de robos.

Pese a que las causas de la inundación no están claras, algunas autoridades dijeron que podrían obedecer a canales irregulares que algunos productores rurales habrían realizado para evacuar las aguas de sus parcelas. La mayor parte de los evacuados se encontraba en un gimnasio municipal, pero no se registraron víctimas. □

Colombia aumentará vigilancia frontera con Ecuador con civiles

BOGOTÁ (Reuters) - Colombia aumentará la vigilancia de su frontera con Ecuador para evitar ataques de la guerrilla izquierdista y de otros grupos armados ilegales con la conformación de redes de civiles que recibirán una bonificación económica, dijo el jueves el presidente Alvaro Uribe.

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El anuncio podría contribuir a acelerar el proceso de normalización de las relaciones diplomáticas entre los dos países, suspendidas por Quito en marzo del 2008 después de un ataque de militares de Colombia en la selva de Ecuador en el que murió el líder de las FARC Raúl Reyes y 24 personas más.

El Gobierno del presidente de Ecuador, Rafael Correa, frecuentemente critica la escasa presencia militar de Colombia en la frontera, lo que en concepto del mandatario izquierdista permite el desborde del conflicto de su vecino hacia su país.

“Yo quiero invitarlos a que instalemos en toda esta línea del río, y en todos los sitios de la patria donde se requiera, las redes de cooperantes con bonificación económica. Se les da una plática cada mes, les ayuda a llevar sus obligaciones y los comprometemos más con la patria para informarle a la Fuerza Pública”, dijo Uribe.

“Nosotros no somos capaces de poner un soldado cada metro, es imposible. Y los terroristas utilizan cualquier espacio. Nosotros tenemos que demostrarles a los colombianos, al Gobierno del Ecuador y al pueblo ecuatoriano toda nuestra voluntad y eficacia para cuidar la frontera”, agregó durante una visita a una base militar en Puerto Ospina, en el departamento del Putumayo, fronterizo con Ecuador.

La frontera de Colombia con Ecuador, de 586 kilómetros, es una de las más afectadas por el narcotráfico y el conflicto colombiano. □

Falleció ex presidente venezolano Rafael Caldera

La familia no quería recibir ningún honor oficial de parte del Gobierno

CARACAS (Reuters) - El ex presidente de Venezuela Rafael Caldera, quien gobernó la nación petrolera durante los periodos 1969-1974 y 1994-1999, falleció en la madrugada del jueves.

Medios locales informaron que el ex mandatario de 93 años sufrió durante largo tiempo de mal de Parkinson. Caldera fue presidente durante la mayor crisis financiera de Venezuela entre 1994-1995, que arrasó con casi la mitad del sistema financiero del país y tuvo un costo de unos 11.000 millones de dólares. El ex gobernante también

indultó en 1994 al actual presidente de Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, quien cumplía una condena en una cárcel militar por liderar un intento de golpe de Estado en 1992 contra el entonces mandatario Carlos Andrés Pérez. Cuatro años después, Caldera entregaría la presidencia al militar retirado, quien juró cumplir sus deberes sobre una "moribunda" Carta Magna y que casi de inmediato procedió a convocar a una reforma constituyente.

El hijo del ex mandatario, el también político Andrés Caldera, informó que Chávez contactó a la familia

para ofrecerles el pésame. "Me llamó el presidente Chávez, para darle sus condolencias a la familia (...) Me dijo que estaba enterado que la familia no quería recibir ningún honor oficial de parte del Gobierno", dijo Caldera.

El político además fundó el partido Demócrata Cristiano COPEI, que con la Acción Democrática ejerció la hegemonía política en la nación sudamericana desde finales de la década de 1950 hasta el inicio de la presidencia de Chávez.

Caldera nació el 24 de enero de 1916 en San Felipe, estado de Yaracuy, al



El ex presidente de Venezuela Rafael Caldera (foto), quien gobernó la nación petrolera durante los periodos 1969-1974 y 1994-1999, falleció en la madrugada del jueves a los 94 años. Medios locales informaron que el ex mandatario sufrió durante años el mal de Parkinson. REUTERS/ARCHIVO

centro-norte de Venezuela, Políticas en la Universidad y cursó estudios de Ciencias Central de Venezuela. □

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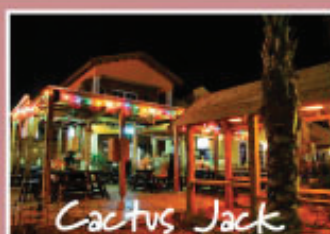


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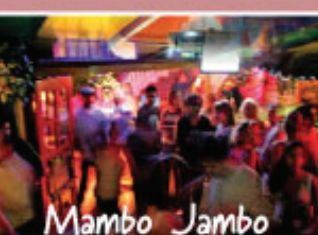
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